Apache helicopter pays a visit to Exeter

2 September 2011 - The Met Office's Exeter HQ hosted Army Air Corps aircrew and their Apache attack helicopter as part of a fact finding visit.

Army Air Corps and Met Office staff regularly meet to discuss how to continue developing services and utilise the latest advances in technology in support of operations.

The Apache, from Middle Wallop, Hampshire, landed at the Devon and Cornwall Police headquarters at Middlemoor as part of a routine training flight. This was a rare opportunity for Met Office staff outside of Middle Wallop to see the aircraft up close.

The Met Office provides the British Armed Forces with a world-leading range of tailored information direct to military decision-makers. The weather and other environmental factors can have a critical impact on the success of military operations

Major Buzz Robinson, from 673 Squadron Middle Wallop, said: "When it comes to flying helicopters, weather is crucial to everything we do. It affects everything from how high we can fly, the range of our weapons, journey times and even how much fuel we take on board. Met Office staff do an amazing job to ensure we have the very best information and guidance, specific to our needs that enable us to make tactical decisions."

As well as a range of services provided by staff at the Met Office HQ, there is also a dedicated team of forecasters based at Middle Wallop. Also, Mobile Met Units, staffed by specially trained Met Office forecasters, provide information to pilots flying in operational theatres from their location close to the front line.

Ric Robins, part of the Forecasting Delivery Team for Defence Operations at the Met Office, said: "As well as being meteorologists, our long history and strong relationship of working with UK Armed Forces means we understand how weather can affect military operations. We can help them operate efficiently, effectively, and maintain a tactical advantage wherever they are in the world."

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